

Funeral homily for Margaret Mouwad

In the history of American advertising one of the most iconic figures is the so-called “Marlboro Man”, a rugged free spirit who came to symbolize for the viewing public independence and individualism. The first commercial in which he appeared for a brand of cigarettes was in 1954, and the last one was forty-five years later, in 1999. So successful was the marketing initiative that the “Marlboro man” was one of most publicly recognized faces on television and in magazines for nearly a half-century! Without a name, without a history and with no known permanent address, he drifts along from one place to another, having no destination in mind. At the end of the commercial he rides off into the sunset. He is a man without roots, and a wanderer.

He is a representative of today’s generation: lonesome and wandering about aimlessly with no fixed abode.

The life a Christian is altogether different.

From the day of our baptism, we are on a journey, a pilgrimage. But where are we going? Our destination is “the Father’s House”. Christ is the one who leads us. He is “the Way” (Jn. 14:6). Our life indeed has a destination. And it is not without significance that Christ has prepared a place for each one of us so that where he is we may be also.

As her life drew to an end, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was asked by an intrepid journalist if she looked forward to death. She smiled. “Of course”, she replied. “I am going home”.

In his Letter to the Hebrews the inspired author writes, “For here we have no permanent home, but we are seekers after the city which is to come” (Heb. 13:14).

St. Paul reminds the Christians of Philippi that their citizenship is in heaven.

Margaret had a passion for traveling. Unlike the Marlboro man, she had a name, a history and belonged to a community of faith. She did not walk about aimlessly since she had a good sense of direction. She was focused on her traveling companion, Christ.

In the Middle Ages it was said, “If you do not travel with the king whom you seek, you will not find him at the end of your journey”.

We believe in everlasting life.

What Dorothy of Kansas once said is true for all of us: “There is no place like home”